## UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT of the INTERIOR

## \*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\* news release

FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

Flanagan or Most - Interior 5634

For Release to PM's, MARCH 3, 1962

NUMBER OF WATERFOWL OBSERVED IN CENTRAL FLYWAY SURVEY LOWER THAN IN 1961

The number of migratory waterfowl observed during the recent annual mid-winter survey in the Central Flyway of the United States was 22 percent lower than a year ago, the Department of the Interior reported today.

The number of ducks observed was 23 percent below 1961; blue and snow geese were down 23 percent; white-fronted geese, up 33 percent from last year, but 30 percent below the 7-year average; Canada geese, relatively unchanged; and coots, down 20 percent.

Mallards, which make up nearly 50 percent of the duck bag in the Central Flyway, were down 14 percent from 1961 and nearly 40 percent below the 7-year average. Green-winged teal and blue-winged teal were down 55 percent and 38 percent, respectively. The number of pintails recorded was 39 percent below last year. These four species comprise about 80 percent of the bag in the flyway.

A comparison of this year's figures with last year's indicates that diving ducks were down 17 percent despite the closed season on canvasbacks and redheads. The Central Flyway winters a major portion of the redhead duck population, and the number of these birds seen during the survey was 43 percent lower than observed the previous year. Wintering canvasbacks observed were down almost 45 percent.

Three States--Montana, New Mexico, and Oklahoma--showed increases in wintering waterfowl; however, only the New Mexico and Oklahoma increases were significant. The remaining States of the flyway--Colorado, North Dakota, South Dakota, Nebraska, Wyoming, Kansas, and Texas--and the east coast and interior sections of Mexico had decreases ranging from about 5 percent to 90 percent.

Some 299 State and Federal observers participated in the annual survey of wintering waterfowl. Thirty-one aircraft were flown about 23,000 miles to survey the populations of ducks, geese, and coots that winter in the States of the flyway. In addition, about 21,500 miles were traveled by boat, car, and other forms of land transportation to enumerate the waterfowl. Biologists of the Bureau of Sport Fisheries and Wildlife, Fish and Wildlife Service, conducted the survey along the east coast and the interior of Mexico.

Results of the survey, along with information from breeding ground surveys, estimates of the waterfowl kill, duck wing collection program, and analyses of banding data, are considered by the Bureau and the States in formulating annual waterfowl regulations.